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HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO US, HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO US, HAPPY BIRTHDAY DEAR J-FAN, HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO US.

Yes that's right, we're one month old already. Boy does time fly by when you're drunk...er, having fun.

Well, we survived our first convention (just) and if you weren't there, why not? No that's no excuse. I'll expect to see you again next year. A big thankyou to everyone who made us feel welcome and it was nice to meet you all face to face. For a full report see the article in this issue.

LOVE IS IN THE AIR

Congratulations are in order for not only have Lewis Sharman (convention committee member) and his young lady-friend Karen Ashdown got engaged, but during the closing ceremony 'Dragon' of the London Anime Club proposed to his girlfriend and received the positive to great applause (it must be something in the water). From all of us here at J-FAN, we wish

you all the happiness in the world and hope the future holds nothing but joy. DMEDETO.....



Well, we thought you might like to have a look at J-FAN Towers. As you can see it has a rather Cornish, 'tin minny' feel to it but at least there's good air conditioning. The chimney currently has all of this issues prizes stuffed up it.

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J-FAN NEWSDESK

PEACH In there guys and gals, and welcome again to the only place where you'll find the hottest gossip around! And speaking of hot, the sun is a real scorcher today as I relax in this desolate post-apocalyptic setting. Yes indeed, these crumbling old buildings thrusting forth from the barren ground like the teeth of some enormous predator are surely wibbling a bit in the heat here. So as I lean back into my deckchair and sip on my Horlicks here's the first spattering of news.

NOT FOR MEN

If you are female and into anime, you may be feeling a little frustrated. But fear no longer as the first girls only anime club has arrived! Being male, I am in no position to comment, so I'll let the flyer do the talking. 'That's right! ANIME BABES is an all-female anime club that encourages fan activity. We offer fan contacts, the opportunity to trade OOTS and tapes with other females, and a newsletter that is tailored to your needs. Most of all, we want the world to know we exist. ANIME BABES hopes to build up a following of females who will help to get the female point of view heard, and to get more "girls stuff" released into the UK market. We're sure that you want to see this too, so for more details, just send an SASE to:

Lisa Mynns, 4 Trevellyn Road, Laundston, Cornwall, PL15 7HW

And there you have it. And no winking in pretending to be female guys. C'mon, you know who you are.

PEACH Of course, no Newsdesk

would be complete without a guest reader, so say hello Kenzaburo, the ONLY Fist of the North Star!

KEN I am honoured to be here for PEACH.

PEACH Indeed you are. I understand that you are somewhat capable in the area of self defence. What do you find most appealing about your particular style of combat?

KEN I like to scream in a high pitched voice. It makes me feel like a schoolgirl again.

PEACH Uh, right. Well, I think we'd better have some more news now.

BYE BYE BANNA

Diamond, a division of Teien, are no longer handling the distribution of Viz comics. This monumental task has been handed over to Casitol, a smaller company who deal far less in the UK, and because of niggles like minimum orders and the need to open special accounts etc. this means that many of the smaller comic shops will find it increasingly difficult to get hold of Viz products. This seems to be a bad move for Viz and we can hope that as their sales start to drop, they will see the error of their ways and revert to their old company. But until then, you may have to start hunting down those copies of Banna.

IRRELEVANT

Why is it that pocket Japanese dictionaries often miss out fairly common or slang words, but have entries like Umihodoko - The brooch-pouch of the Hamifusus.

RIOT - Just one of the many Viz comics that will be missing from the shelves of your local comic shop?

Tennaderus In them? It's surely one of the great mysteries of the Universe.

KEN Nice little pink tutu I've PEACH. I must stop you there as the viewers are back. You've got several brothers, Ken. What are they like?

KEN Oh, they're a riot! You know one of them threw me over a cliff once as a tank! How we laughed!

PEACH That's just great, but I'm getting a cue that it's your turn to read some news.

KEN OK. What do I do?

PEACH Just look at the monitor and read what you see.

GET ORGANISED

Have you ever written something down then forgotten where it is? Or maybe you've missed some spleen-crampingly important event sometime in your past. Well, this need never happen again as Viz Communications of America have released the Banna 1/2 Organizer.

Complete with a pen, notebook,





ANIME BABES! The all-girl club.

Diary and address book, and bound in a full colour magnetic locking case, the only thing you'll have to remember is where you put it. And if that isn't good enough for you, you'll also get 2 sheets of Sanma stickers to help you spruce the word. Groovy.

IRRELEVANT

KEN: I enjoyed that. I'm a jolly dancing star, you know.

PEACH: I'm sure you are.

KEN: Can I do it again? Please?

Please? Purrleeeeeeet!

PEACH: Alright, go ahead.

SITE SEE GAL

One of the more popular British fan manga titles is Josh OH Clark's **ANIEL - HIGH SCHOOL DEVIL GIRL**, and now you can have the chance to have your very own Aniel as Ground Zero Games, the leaders in anime style miniatures, are planning a figure of the girl herself.

MAGIC KNIGHT RAYEARTH -
Exploding onto your TV screen next year. Or you live in America that is!

RUMBLE RUMBLE

Many things on this Earth emit low grumbling sounds that are the first signs of change. My stomach, for example, or maybe the odd volcano. But currently there is a grinding noise coming from deep in the bowels of Manga Entertainment. Two very pleasant gentlemen Andy Fearn and Martin Bowyer in the aforementioned company are. Now that I put it, not there anymore. Far be it from us to spread rumour as to why. But this may signify a possible change in direction. Could we be seeing more subtitled anime from them in the future? Who knows? That is all I have to say.

PEACH: Look, you're pretty good at this. How would you like to come back next month and do the weather for us?

KEN: Scooper dooper! I'm so excited! ATATABATATAHH! Sorry I couldn't help that.

PEACH: It's OK. Have a mint.

WHAT ABOUT US?

Not content with running the much loved/hated **SAILOR MOON** on US TV, Autumn '96 will see the gilly serial anime **MAGIC KNIGHT RAYEARTH** on their screens. But 'what about us Brits?' I hear you cry. 'Sod all for us I'm afraid (as usual!'

VERSUS ANIME

WHAT WITH **STREET FIGHTER II**, **FATAL FURY** and **SAMURAI SPIRITS/SHOWDOWN**, it seems to be becoming a trend to turn the latest beat 'em up's into anime series these days. The latest in the long line is SEGGA's pioneering 3D jobby **VIRTUA FIGHTER**, which is airing on Japanese TV. Character designers have gone for the traditional human look which is a bit of a missed opportunity really. It would have been nice for them to have taken a risk in giving the characters an angular appearance like in the arcades. Oh. Well.

KEN: You know, I was quite a singer when I was young. I could shatter a glass from ten meters.

PEACH: Cor, you need some expensive voice training to do that.

KEN: Not really. Just a very tight corset.

PEACH: I wouldn't know. AHem well I'm afraid that's all the news for this time. Next month I'll be visiting a certain part of Japan but you'll have to wait and see where, and when! See you!

KEN: Later.





He's lazy. He's careless.

He's totally unpredictable. And he's here to give you the lowdown on this most irresponsible of anime series. Take it away Kevin Cuo...

IRRESPONSIBLE CAPTAIN TYLOR began life as a story by the author Taiira Yoshioka, who is better known in the UK for **HUMMINGBIRDS**. Like **HUMMINGBIRDS**, TYLOR is a nasty satire, but instead of the entertainment business, it ridicules the tradition of macho war stories. After leaping to television, TYLOR took what appeared to be a backwards step, back into the world of OAV's, possibly because its storyline was a bit too close to the mark for mass audiences. But, in 1995 it's still going strong with yet another OAV series, called **NEWTYLOR**.

The appeal of TYLOR, if indeed it does appeal to the Japanese (see below), is easily explained. Captain Tylor is the ultimate slacker, a real no-hoper in a culture that prizes hard work and dedication. And yet his utter gormlessness carries him far, he becomes a commander by accident, because of his lust after a

an alien queen, and blunders through his career by doing absolutely nothing. Japanese kids, tired of the harrowing cramming for exams and pressure to perform, might easily find something compelling in this tale of success through stupidity. Even the man's name is synonymous with being a 'loser'. The Japanese spelling of his name, 'Taiira' is not only a pun on the name of the author, it is also the name of the clan who lost the Japanese civil war many centuries ago.

IRRESPONSIBLE CAPTAIN TYLOR is riddled with jokes at Japanese popular culture. Tylor is the exact opposite of a Japanese martial hero. He's cowardly and undisciplined,

disloyal, lecherous and above all **IRRESPONSIBLE**. Once he blags his way into the military, he's given an antique, battered, aging part of a ship ('The Slight Wind'), whose previous crew committed mass suicide from depression. The noble warriors he commands are a gang of thugs, the ship's



nurse is an alien spy, and the commanding officers would like nothing better than to chuck him out of the airlock. The valiant officers are all named after martial icons, with names like Fuji and Miyama, but their blundered nationalism always ends up succumbing to Tyler's stupidity. It's as if the message of *TYLOE* is aimed right at the apologetic, slacker-generation of modern Japan. Forget the doomed excesses of your parents, just have fun and you'll fall on your feet!

In Tyler's first mission as Captain, the disgruntled troops give him a bomb as a present. But before he can open it, disension in the ranks and the resulting ricochets cause his ship to warp into the middle of an alien war party. Tyler promptly surrenders, much to the consternation of his crew. He then hands the alien commander a gift as a token of his honesty, and as usual, Tyler sucks into a winning situation. The gift he gives them is the very same parcel-bomb that his own troops were going to mutiny with, and when the alien commander opens it on his own shuttle, it's blown to pieces. In the resulting



confusion, the other alien ships open fire on each other, and Tyler returns to Earth having won without firing a shot.

This is typical of Tyler's disingenuous victory through failure, and such situations are repeated throughout the series. In another story, Earth Command plant a homing beacon on him and send him towards the enemy fleet. The plan is to blow away the

evil *Eagles* by shooting at the homing beacon. But Tyler loses it on the way back to his ship, the aliens home in on the signal, and find themselves materialising in the middle of the Earth Space Fleet. Thus, Tyler manages to survive again, pulling a victory out of a suicide mission.

No anime would be complete without a complicated love-polygon around the male lead, and *TYLOE* is no exception. There's not only the girl-next-door, Lt Furiko Star, and the obsessed alien princess, Queen Azaling Gogo. There's also a bevy of beautiful twins, Emi and Yumi, who's light-bulbs are so dim that switching them off would brighten a room. Harumi is an alien spy planted on the *Slight Wind*, with orders to kill Tyler, but somehow she never quite gets around to it. She's an expert in seducing fine, upstanding officers, but Tyler is such a pervert she isn't prepared for it.

With a 36 episode run on TV, followed by a tell-tale move to 'straight to video' OAV's, Tyler's success remains somewhat doubtful. There remains a chance that it keeps going as a result of company policy rather than commercial acclaim. After





all, NEWTYPE publishers Kadokawa Shoten have a stake in the profits, and it's relatively easy for them to give each new incarnation another plug in their magazine. There have even been rumours that TYLOR remains a 'go-project' because it is a company in-joke. The man responsible for Kadokawa's anime/manga line is the privileged rich-kid Haruki Kadokawa, who enjoys a reputation with the more conservative directors as a spoiled brat given a 'trashy' wing of the company to keep him out of trouble.

Haruki Kadokawa is exactly the kind of executive who would find TYLOR's plot really funny. A self-confessed slacker given control of a dead dog of an organisation, turning it into a winner through just doing as he pleases... Kadokawa Shoten's anime and manga line is often regarded as Haruki's personal indulgence, and when he was arrested for drug smuggling a couple of years ago, there was a real fear in the company that Haruki's departure from the board would also result in the cancellation of his beloved NEWTYPE. But it would appear that NEWTYPE, albeit a bit of an embarrassment in a company whose main business is school books, is still too much of a money-spinner to stay under for long, and the magazine continues.

So too does IRRESPONSIBLE CAPTAIN TYLOR, with a new six-episode series out in late 1995. In a new twist, TYLOR

is no longer the main character, since each episode concentrates on incidents in the lives of the many supporting roles. The series began with 'SWEET XVI', a tale of the misunderstood teenage invader Asahara Ikuo. Once again, there is a chance that this has less to do with the appeal of Tylor than it does with other changes in the anime business. Sweet XVI, for example, is a chance to make the marginalised Asahara the star of the entire video, a smart move when you consider she is played by Hiroko Kashiwara, who has gained new popularity through her role as the spongyous Armageddon III in Pioneer's new OAV series. At time of writing, it continues with a look at Tylor's maverick pilot assistant K.E. Andersen. Each character gets an episode to themselves, another indulgence that would seem to reflect TYLOR's position as a real fan favourite. No mass market trash would ever warrant such treatment, but then again, if Haruki Kadokawa is really masterminding the whole thing, this might just be one more example of how much you can get away with if you've got more money than sense...



IRRESPONSIBLE CHARACTERS



Justy Ueda Tylor (201)

A complete failure in the modern business world, Tylor joins the military in search of the easy life. A fine candidate for the dimmest, briskest anime character ever.



Akiro Gōda (194)

Akiro used to be your everyday alien princess: until her father's death in suspicious circumstances suddenly made her the ruler of an alien empire. Now her Grand Vizier has plunged her into an apocalyptic war which she could do without and she wants to return to the carefree days of her childhood. And that Captain Tylor reminds her ever so slightly of the little pet she used to have when she was a girl.



Yuriko Star (130)

A fine upstanding Lieutenant Commander anime cynics can easily pigeon-hole Yuriko as the girl-next-door model. Like Shinsou in Urusei Yatsura, she has 'future wife' written all over her: just as soon as our hero stops frolicking with alien babes. Yuriko is a year younger than Tylor, and most disapproving of his activities.



Emi and Yumi Hanner (17)

Two gorgeous twins with a good line in sassy Japanese. The Hanners are the daughters of a retired Admiral. While they certainly haven't inherited his looks, their hapazard ways of flying ships seems to indicate they've inherited at least some of his skills.



Sub-Lieutenant Mi Yamamoto (25)

Tylor's alter ego in many ways, although underneath it all it's likely that the boys could be sharing the same brain cell. Yamamoto is a parody of military efficiency: strict, loyal, patriotic but tragically stupid. We would have commended the Right Wind were it not for Tylor's sudden arrival, and if his sense of ultra-discipline is anything to go by, he would have been thrown out the window by the rate troopers long ago.



Staff Sergeant Harumi (31)

Built to be the coolest thing alive, Harumi is in fact a genetically-engineered creature, designed by the Ragion empire for spying on Tylor and his crew. She's supposed to cause chaos in the ranks, but unfortunately, Tylor does that job all too well on his own.



Sergeant Cryburn (13)

The leader of the marines on board the Slight Wind, the mischievous Sergeant Cryburn is a psychopath who believes in shooting first and not asking any questions at all.



Lieutenant Andriessen (26)

Intelligent and ruthless, with a yearning to be a fighter pilot, Andriessen wasn't posted to the dead-end job on the Slight Wind because he was too stupid, but because he was too unpredictable in a fight.



Premier Wang (33)

He may look like the Sheik of Arabi, but Wang is a nasty piece of work. It would be slanderous to even suggest that he might be responsible for the death of his Emperor Goga Xixi, so I won't even mention it. Wang's the man to blame for the war between Terra and the Reigan Empire, so watch your step.



Admiral Mifune (55) and Admiral Fuji (50)

Although they continue to tell Tyler how happy they are with his heroic deeds, the Admirals are the ones who keep on dreaming up suicidal missions for him. Their desire to get rid of Tyler eventually makes them more dangerous than the enemy.



Captain Ru (30) and Dom (38)

Only one thing protects Azeling from the Byzantine machinations of Wang, and that's the noble Captain Ru, with his floppy hair and bendy sword! Wang knows it too, and begins plotting to have both Azeling and Ru killed so that he can have the throne to himself.



HOW TO TAKE OVER THE WORLD

During the past couple of years Japanese Pop Culture has taken the UK by storm, being seized upon by thousands and embedded itself as part of the modern youth scene. In Japan the story is pretty much the same. Except, of course, that over there the love of anime spills away from the 'young adult' market in both directions and it's nothing new, the Japanese have been watching anime for years. But so far no one has stopped to ask what the differences are between how anime reaches it's audience both in it's native land and over here. It's an important question. The selling of anime determines it's audience, how frequently it's bought and the difference it makes to the lives of the people involved with it. It is possibly one of the greatest unexplored questions in Japanese fandom.

Let's start by taking a quick peek at Japan and the UK.

JAPAN

Animation is a popular form of mass entertainment and a TV staple with top shows getting prime time slots. People have grown up with animation, it's more acceptable for an adult to watch 'Cartoons' (Shashonchi) etc. But it's not acceptable to be too obsessive about them. In Japan, Otaku is derided (an Otaku is very much a derisive term). There's a close link between manga and anime. Manga is read in bus by people of all ages: in fact 90% of all Japanese women read Manga (compare that with the UK's most top anime related start out as manga). There's an immense fan base: the fans are highly active and motivated people who eagerly await the next instalments of their favourite series. Merchandising is a fact of life. Anything that's popular has merchandising produced for it - ranging from CDs to collectors cards, from clothing to, well, just about anything. Often the merchandising is more important than the show. Some releases

especially Bandai, are 25 minute adverts for the merchandise.

UK

Anime has come 'adult' - it's a cool thing to be into. There are fewer casual anime buyers. Though their numbers are increasing. The anime fan base in the UK is much, much smaller than Japan. Anime is mainly bought by people in the 10 - 24 year old age range. In general terms it's not opened out to the general population, though several video labels are attempting to gain a wider family audience. It's viewed with distrust by most of the mass broadcast media, although recent agreements with TV showings on BBC2 and Channel 4 have been successful. Hardly any adults read comics. To do so is often seen as a sign of immaturity or weirdness. Very little merchandising is directly licensed and produced in this country for video releases.

Let's look now at two of our major players in the British anime scene, Manga Entertainment were the first to push anime, and gained a name specialising in the more adult and 'sensationalist' side of the market. In fact they've become so

successful that for many people the words 'manga and anime' have become interchangeable. However on the other hand are the daily Japanese creators of anime so he working directly in the UK, concentrating squarely on more 'mainstream' releases which can be enjoyed as family viewing. The important point here though is that family viewing does not mean children's stories. Just something that all members of the family can enjoy.

The UK's No. 1 Manga Entertainment

Over the past few years, Manga Entertainment has varied anime out of the fanboy closets and into the mass market. Their video releases frequent the charts and have opened up whole new sections of video stores. They've managed this by having a product that people want, and by some silly



TO THE WEST
Examples showing how video companies sometimes 'Westernise' the covers to anime, with a direct aim at the male mass-market.

LD AND ENTERTAIN PEOPLE

Robert Layton Dore explores the way in which anime is marketed in the UK and Japan

cool marketing. Here's how they go about it:

Manga Entertainment believe in having direct contact with their fans, they have a database of 25-30,000 people who all receive direct mailings. Plus there's the Manga club, a body consisting of some 8200 fans who regularly buy Manga video releases and who have all paid to be club members. They receive copies of MANGAZINE, an irregular time produced by Manga Publishing that's full of previews, articles, special offers and competitions. All of Manga Entertainment's marketing is aimed squarely at their assumed market (who are all 16-34 year old males). You'll find adverts for Manga videos in media magazines like Empire, in best selling comics like JUMP, in the video game press and style magazines (such as, for example,

The Mirror

Entertainment)

marketing magazine is not content to just place a few glossy adverts to get the message across. Added to this is a huge campaign involving a world wide web site, the use of in store advertising, cinema screenings, TV advertising and a massive effort to get anime on TV (even if it is being a lot more of this in the coming year). This level of activity is far, far greater than the marketing divisions of most video companies who traditionally have tended to focus on getting video's edge done dealers. In fact it would be fair to say that their marketing machine is very much modelled on the way that a record company would work. And we all know how successful they can be at getting sales...

Pioneer LDCs

Pioneer are Makyo amongst UK



PIONEER's lively design makes no effort to hide it's origins.

anime publishing houses. This are the only original producers of anime operating in the UK through Manga Entertainment are now getting involved in production, and are the only company operating in both the UK and Japan. However the British arm of Pioneer LDC is completely independent of it's Japanese parent and though dependent on the Japanese side of the operation for its product, the UK company runs its own marketing and PR campaigns.

For the British side of the operation, the objective is to create awareness of the product through, not only adverts, reviews and magazine articles, but also via exposure on TV - on shows like The Big Breakfast, Live & Kicking, satellite channels such as Musicbox and radio by getting soundbites from the latest releases on the air. The team at Pioneer's PR company are convinced that getting clippings from their videos recognised is very important. Merchandising is also a vital tool in Pioneer's armoury, with postcards and t-shirts already being made available to fans.

So how does this differ from the Japanese side of the market? Well let's say each character band selling is very important in Japan,

see look at the magazines and the wealth of available merchandising will tell you that. It's something that Pioneer have done very well - especially with Toei's Muyo - which was from GYA to TV series largely on the strength of it's characters.

The Magazines

Magazines are where the trade and fans converge. So by looking at how three of the biggest mags in the business do their thing, we should be able to learn a thing or two...

First from Japan we have

Neotype

The anime magazine. Probably the most famous anime/Japanese media publication in the world.

Undoubtedly the most stylish of the three magazines covered here. Successful marketing to trend as immense number of adverts, feature articles, serialised novels, manga, eye-catches, 'How To...' tutorials and reviews within its massive bulk of pages. Like many Japanese publications it prints on both very cheap stock paper and the most expensive, glossiest paper imaginable. Its designers have learned the art of seamlessly

blending artwork, articles and adverts together in a manner which leaves the reader breathless and enthusiastic for its contents.

Anime UK/PX

Anime PX (formerly known as Anime UK) is the UK's longest running anime publication. Over the past 3 years it has transformed itself from a small photocopied fanzine into a full colour monthly, at all times asserting its independence of origin and view point. It is also the only anime magazine currently available in this country set to have a translated manga alongside it's pages.

Manga Media

The voice of Manga entertainment in the UK, and one of the focal points for their marketing machine, it straddles very strongly the links between anime and manga and differs greatly from the other titles considered here in that it's main thrust are the manga (which aren't always originate from Japan) living within it's pages. Added to this are collections of news, reviews and feature articles featuring anime, it's creators and other related topics from across the world, which makes it more than an anthology but definitely not less than a magazine. It's same to more full colour advertisements from various video labels than any other UK magazine at the time of writing.

As an interesting aside, if you combined Manga Media and Anime UK, then you'd have something approaching a Japanese anime magazine. (It's not for).

Spot the Difference

After exploring how bright the audience in Japan and the UK, taking snapshots of some marketing and video companies, it's time to play spot the difference. After all what else is the difference between how anime is sold over here and in it's home?

Well, in a odd kind of way there are very few actual differences in the techniques used to reach the audience of anime, in terms of their pop culture marketing is pop culture marketing. Okay, so the UK doesn't have the direct sale only

videos of Japan, and doesn't hit the air relay so much on the TV viewing or manga sales to generate attention. But in both countries the objective of the marketing team is the same: catch the fans and keep them hooked. And it's

focus of attention anime marketing teams do not rely on people just knowing that the stuff is out there or by expecting them to spot it in the shops.

But the techniques being used disguise the real differences between Japan and the UK, in Japan all that matters is getting to your audience and maximising sales potential. In this country the job is two-fold: maximise sales and generate a culture of people who will go out and buy a video series without any prior knowledge of what it's like. Most conventional video series are the presentation of well known TV shows in a convenient package. As the wealth of Star Trek episodes or *Star Trek: Voyager* and *Star Trek: Voyager* shows, most are well known, where as different about anime is that it's come along with a new and alien style, without any cultural back-up and has become massively popular. The marketing and PR people are now faced with the task of making it palatable. One phenomenon's trend not to be overlooked, which sets anime apart in this country, you have to first sell it and then get so many people interested in it, that its growth and popularity will spread from the young SF fans out into the general population. In other words - they want to make conditions for anime in this country pretty much the same as they are in Japan.

So perhaps anime marketing and PR techniques are the wrong thing to concentrate on, instead it's how you win some quarters, is anime a fad, or is it like the much publicised information superhighway another sign of the obsolescence of culture? And are we watching the birth of new generations whose cultural identity comes not from where they live, but where the fans they live in? Or has it already happened and no one has noticed.



NEWTYPE: Japan's premier animation magazine.

done, broadly speaking, in the same way. Via specialist fan-powered adverts, in store demos, special offers, trailers, etc. The main point is that the fan has become the

WE THANKS TO MANGA ENTERTAINMENT AND PIONEER FOR THEIR ASSISTANCE IN THE PRODUCTION OF THIS ARTICLE

GHOST IN THE SHELL

ONE SMALL STEP FOR CINEMA. ONE GIANT LEAP FOR ANIMATION.

Not since the release of *AKIRA* has there been such a major event in the UK anime scene, but now another page of history has been written. For the first time ever, a Japanese animated movie is being given a simultaneous release in Japan, Britain and the U.S. Never before has an anime received such international recognition and it can only lead to greater things.

Based on the manga by Masamune Shiroe (SHIMURA), *Ghost in the Shell*, the film has been co-produced by SODASHA, DAIKYO VIDEO, and MANGA ENTERTAINMENT, the first ever western partner in a Japanese anime project. *GHOST IN THE SHELL* received its premiere at the Odeon Cinema in Leicester Square on Saturday November 11th, as part of the London Film Festival.

As for the storyline: by the year 2029, cyber-technology has advanced to such a stage that the human brain can now be linked to computer networks via interfaces in the back of the skull. An elite group of law enforcers called the *SHELL* have been given these cybernetic implants to help in their fight against the criminals and terrorists of this high tech world. But as with every advance in technology there is a price to pay.

Setting new standards in animation by incorporating the use of state of the art computer graphics and the traditional cel animation, *GHOST IN THE SHELL* is a wonder to behold. But as well as the animation there is also a warning to be heeded, that of the director. Technology and medical progress might take



GHOST IN THE SHELL

CRITICISM: 16

RUNNING TIME: 82 minutes

Directed by: Mamoru Oshii

Created by: Masamune Shiroe

Screenplay by: Kōzumi Ōgino

Music Director: Kōji Ōgino

Character Design: Shōji Kawamori

Hiroyuki Oshino

SHELL

ANT LEAP FOR ANIME.

CAST
 Aetna.....Richard George
 Kusanagi.....Mimi Woods
 Aramida.....William Frederick

THE J-PAN OPTION

This film has certainly crossed it's fair share of types in the anime world, but is it up to scratch?

The storyline is superb, with an excellent amount of thought and imagination going into it, to create one of the most exciting showdowns since Blade Runner. The show which are well thought out and handled with care and realism, and you consistently find yourself thinking, 'What a great idea!' For a Japanese OVA film, there is far less conservatism than you may expect, making it genuinely more watchable and avoiding any slow and uninteresting scenes.

The standard of animation, while superb, is not quite as good as you expected. Don't misinterpret this - there are some cracking moments, but it was looking forward to something that could blast Aetna out of the writer, and it doesn't. A special mention must go to the title sequence though, which suits some very fitting and haunting music, is one of the most memorable scenes in the movie.

If there is one thing that I could fault the film for, it is the ending. On face of one, all throughout you are carried along on the cleverness of the story and the animation and suddenly, after a brief battle scene, the film, with all the freedom in making anime, I wish that more could have been done - it just doesn't build up to an elegantly climax that Aetna is really delivered. Also, while the dubbing is acceptable, it doesn't quite have the feeling that a major film requires.

But don't let that put you off, it's still a decent movie and well worth seeing.

SHOT IN THE SHELL, will open at the following cinemas from December 10th (call for details):
 B'HAM: IFCM 0121 440 5225
 BRISTOL: IFCM 01275 810094
 BRISTOL: SHOWCASE 0117 572 5454
 GLASGOW: IFCM 0141 332 1013
 LEEDS: SHOWCASE 01134 400055
 LONDON: IFCM Trossadero 021 370 6012
 M'DONALD: MGM Salford Quay 0161 873 7379
 M'HAMPTON: IFCM 01924 813 545
 N'HAM: SHOWCASE 0115 988755
 GLASGOW: IFCM 0141 370 5014



ZERAM



LAURENCE
WANGA VIDEO LIVE
RUNNING TIME
97 MINS
CERTIFICATE
18
PRICE
£12.99 (VHS)

Picture a chaffy biological weapon and all-round bad guy is on his way towards Earth's Orpheus, but waiting for him is his professional bounty hunter and all-round babe, billed to make her bounty easier to collect. *My Sissy Boy* is a dimensional dare, created by her Hollywood partner, however, one thing you should expect, this couple of innocent and pretty, stupid humans, caught in the dare, by accident and finally reach their doom, with only two miserable minutes left before the countdown. *Science*

B.B. Gagner reports the interviewee said a lot of Broward residents were in for good pressure. Any it doesn't work The river, and it felt as though flat and I felt down more scared by Cleveland. C There are a few mild visual effects, but there are no small at all makes no major difference. I prefer that I'll get in trouble for leaving the park, but the reason for watching the film is video material, so for some reason I myself. This was for a lot better job than I can make feel that the art me because it looks

1990. "What's in a Name?" *Los Angeles Times*, 12 May 1990, 1.

Blanchard (1994) and others (Gardner, 1995; Givner, 1995; R. Smith, 1995; Smith, 1995) do expect that this situation will not be a permanent one. In fact, Gardner, Givner, and Smith (1995) expect that the situation will be reversed in the near future. They expect that the situation will be reversed in the near future. They expect that the situation will be reversed in the near future.



SEA FRA
DIRECTOR

Katja Aramelya
STORY
Hajime
Matsumoto
SCREENPLAY
Katja Aramelya
Hajime
Matsumoto
CAST
Yuko Moriyama
Kunihiko Iida
Tukujiro Motary
Mizuki Yoshida
Sachi Kasahara

URUSEI YATSURA TV VOL 6



LABEL
ANIME PROJECTS
RUNNING TIME
100 MINS
CERTIFICATE
12
PRICE
\$12.99 (USD)

In this latest type of alien encounter, after eating some candy made by Lum, Akira finds himself sparkling inside, causing great confusion among his family. An attractive female rings goes missing for a second school which he's caught. Akira has accidentally stumbled across. Finally, Lum's father arranges for her to attend a matchmaking party, but when Akira finds out his fiancée's big mouth he sets out to bring the event to a halt. An unusual encounter, but worth a look by its own merits.

Other authors have noted that in the 1970s, 40% of the female *A. trilineatus* in the sample had female in the same and the eggs are still in female (Lasswell 1987). But according to reports with the previous species, one of the differences is a female, which usually develops all the stages to lay young (not female mature, virgin). But every spawning that a fish remains in adult state for more than all the others, interestingly, one species involved, the "brown snail" *Stenotomus* and his egg lay up to 300,000 eggs and the other species, *Stenotomus* (Brazner) *latipinnatus* and *latipinnatus*, in the last spawning two points in the male spawning (female) on the last spawning, 3.1.1987.

WILLIS DE WIL The highlight of my career has to be the 1991 book *Wonders of the World*, which I wrote as a member of the British Antarctic Survey. It was a great honor to be the first author of this story but it has been the New York Times best-seller and the *Scientific American* wants to get it back. This doesn't mean, though, that the final story reached one of the 100 best-selling books in the United States. I don't think I'll be able to do that.



STAMP

MATTHEW GOULD
 CHADY BRUCE
 Akemi Takada
 MUSIC
 Shin-ichi Kasedo
 Fumitaka Anai
CAST
 ATARU
 Toshiro Furukawa
 LUM
 Naoki Hirano
 SHUNCEI
 Takanori Nishimura

VERDICT: WILD, WIERD and WONDERFUL!!

LOCK ON

UK VIDEO

MANGA ENTERTAINMENT

DEC. MACHOS FLY INTO IT	CUB
TEA. THE TUL	CUB
TEA. CUFFY TONG	CUB
TEA. MACHOS PROCEED WITH	CUB
TEA. KIDUO	CUB
TEA. MACHOS THE CUFFY TONG PROCEEDS	CUB

KIDNIP FILMS

JAN. 32. MACHO 1	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins	* Set 15
JAN. 32. MACHO 2	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins	* Set 15
TEA. CUFFY TONG	CUB	* 12 mins	* Set 15
TEA. 32. MACHO 1	CUB	* 12 mins	* Set 15
TEA. 32. MACHO 2	CUB	* 12 mins	* Set 15

PIONEER

JAN. AMERICA 1	CUB	* 12 mins
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ANIME PROJECTS

DEC. SUPER DEFORMATIONAL FEATURING 113 SUB	* 12 mins
DEC. SUPER DEFORMATIONAL FEATURING 113 SUB	* 12 mins
TEA. SUPER DEFORMATIONAL FEATURING 113 SUB	* 12 mins
TEA. SUPER DEFORMATIONAL FEATURING 113 SUB	* 12 mins

CAST 3 WEST

TEA. MACHO 1	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins	* Set 15
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WESTERN CONNECTION

TEA. MACHO 1	CUB
TEA. MACHO 2	CUB
TEA. MACHO 3	CUB

US VIDEO

AD VISION

JAN. CUFFY TONG VOL. 1	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins
JAN. CUFFY TONG VOL. 2	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins
JAN. CUFFY TONG VOL. 3	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins
JAN. CUFFY TONG VOL. 4	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins

SOFTCELL PICTURES

JAN. ANIME OF MACHOS	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins
JAN. ANIME OF MACHOS	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins
JAN. ANIME OF MACHOS	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins
JAN. ANIME OF MACHOS	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins

MACHO TRILogy

JAN. MACHO TRILogy VOL. 1	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins
JAN. MACHO TRILogy VOL. 2	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins
JAN. MACHO TRILogy VOL. 3	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins

ANIMEIGO

JAN. MACHO TRILogy VOL. 1	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins
JAN. MACHO TRILogy VOL. 2	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins

ORION

JAN. THE MACHO TRILogy VOL. 1	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins
JAN. THE MACHO TRILogy VOL. 2	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins
JAN. THE MACHO TRILogy VOL. 3	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins

SOFTWARE SCULPTURES

JAN. MACHO TRILogy VOL. 1	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins
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STREAMLINE

JAN. MACHO TRILogy VOL. 1	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins
JAN. MACHO TRILogy VOL. 2	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins
JAN. MACHO TRILogy VOL. 3	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins
JAN. MACHO TRILogy VOL. 4	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins

SONY

JAN. MACHO TRILogy VOL. 1	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins
JAN. MACHO TRILogy VOL. 2	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins

US MANGA CORPS

JAN. MACHO	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins
JAN. MACHO VOL. 1	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins
JAN. MACHO VOL. 2	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins
JAN. MACHO VOL. 3	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins

CELEBRITY HOME ENTERTAINMENT

JAN. MACHO	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins
JAN. MACHO	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins
JAN. MACHO	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins
JAN. MACHO	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins

UK MANGA/BOOKS

MANGA BOOKS

JAN. MACHO	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins
JAN. MACHO	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins

US MANGA/BOOKS

ACADEMY COMICS

JAN. MACHO	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins
JAN. MACHO	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins
JAN. MACHO	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins
JAN. MACHO	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins

ANTARCTIC PRESS

JAN. MACHO	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins
JAN. MACHO	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins
JAN. MACHO	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins
JAN. MACHO	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins

CMHA COMICS

JAN. MACHO	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins
JAN. MACHO	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins
JAN. MACHO	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins
JAN. MACHO	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins

DANKUJI ENTERPRISES

JAN. MACHO	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins
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DARK HORSE COMICS

JAN. MACHO	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins
JAN. MACHO	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins
JAN. MACHO	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins
JAN. MACHO	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins
JAN. MACHO	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins
JAN. MACHO	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins
JAN. MACHO	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins
JAN. MACHO	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins
JAN. MACHO	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins

MANGA

JAN. MACHO	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins
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UK & US MERCHANDISE

1,000 EDITIONS

JAN. MACHO	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins
JAN. MACHO	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins
JAN. MACHO	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins

INTELEG

JAN. MACHO	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins
JAN. MACHO	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins
JAN. MACHO	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins
JAN. MACHO	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins

COMIC IMAGES

JAN. MACHO	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins
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NEW IN JAPAN

GAME

JAN. MACHO	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins
JAN. MACHO	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins
JAN. MACHO	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins

CD

JAN. MACHO	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins
JAN. MACHO	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins
JAN. MACHO	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins

VIDEO

JAN. MACHO	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins
JAN. MACHO	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins
JAN. MACHO	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins

MANGA

JAN. MACHO	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins
JAN. MACHO	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins
JAN. MACHO	12/15 SUB	* 12 mins

WE'VE GONE BARNY!!

Over £500 of prizes to give away

Yes that's right, we've got over £500 worth of prizes for you lucky people. All through the mag you'll find questions related to each prize. These are in the form of multiple choice to make it even easier for you. Simply decide which is the correct answer and enter the letter of your choice in the relevant box below. EASY. Then, when you've answered as many as you want to, just send the form (or a photocopy) to the address below and wait. All correct entries for each congo will be put in a draw and the lucky winners will be chosen at random from the J-FAN office's executive competition randomiser (OK the bin). A list of the winners will be printed in a later issue and the Ed's decision is final in all matters 'cause I'm the boss, so there!

ALL ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED BY JANUARY 10 1995.

ONLY ONE ENTRY FORM PER PERSON.

MURICA ENTERTAINMENT

4 x Pariahor twin boxed sets
15 x Street Fighter II posters

ANIME PROJECTS

1 x Genesis Summer Galarth original anime cd
2 x AD Pollot miniatures packs

BAST 3 WEST

1 x B Man After 2 tape set
1 x Makoku Karen 2 tape set
1 x Babal II part 1

ROBBO FILMS

2 x Macross boxed sets
2 x Return Of The Overlord boxed sets
2 x Gunbuster boxed sets

WESTERN CONNECTION

1 x Devil Hunter Yoko 3 tape set

PIONEER LDC

10 x Green Legend box posters

DEMON RECORDS

1 x Akira Original Japanese soundtrack cd
1 x Akira Soundtrack CD
1 x Macross Plus 1&2 CD set
1 x Megazone 23 soundtrack CD
1 x Cyber City soundtrack CD

MANGARIN PAPERBACKS

All these titles are published by Mangrin at £8.99 (except Akira at £10.99) and are available from all good bookshops or call 01955-414000

1 x Akira graphic novel

1 x Dome graphic novel
1 x Memories graphic novel
1 x Gun graphic novel

SDXTEEE

1 x Ranna 1/2 1&2 graphic novel set
1 x Street Fighter II graphic novel

BUDSMELLY

4 x Ineffect Original graphic novel set

SOUND & MEDIA

15 x J-Groove CDs

CALUM PRESS

1 x Pastiche pack
1 x John Ferguson (Man artist) cd

IF YOU DO NOT WISH TO CUT UP YOUR MAG, SEND IN A PHOTOCOPY

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY
IN BLOCK CAPITALS

All entries must be received by JANUARY 10th 1995
Only one entry per person

NAME _____	Q1 <input type="checkbox"/>	Q2 <input type="checkbox"/>	Q3 <input type="checkbox"/>	Q4 <input type="checkbox"/>	Q5 <input type="checkbox"/>
ADDRESS _____	Q6 <input type="checkbox"/>	Q7 <input type="checkbox"/>	Q8 <input type="checkbox"/>	Q9 <input type="checkbox"/>	Q10 <input type="checkbox"/>
POSTCODE _____	Q11 <input type="checkbox"/>	Q12 <input type="checkbox"/>	Q13 <input type="checkbox"/>	Q14 <input type="checkbox"/>	Q15 <input type="checkbox"/>
	Q16 <input type="checkbox"/>	Q17 <input type="checkbox"/>	Q18 <input type="checkbox"/>	Q19 <input type="checkbox"/>	Q20 <input type="checkbox"/>
	Q21 <input type="checkbox"/>	Q22 <input type="checkbox"/>	Q23 <input type="checkbox"/>	Q24 <input type="checkbox"/>	Q25 <input type="checkbox"/>
	Q26 <input type="checkbox"/>	Q27 <input type="checkbox"/>			

Send your completed forms to: 'I'VE SEEN SOME BIG ONES IN MY TIME BUT THIS IS RIDICULOUS' CONGO, J-FAN, FRONT PUBLICATIONS LTD, TREVITHICK HOUSE, MIDDSWATER, LISKEARD, CORNWALL PL14 4JH

J-GROOVE - THE SOUL OF JAPAN

SOUND AND MEDIA LIMITED

CAT: MOCD 3017

16 TRACKS 79 mins

At last! Popular Japanese music in England, on a UK label and at a price which doesn't require a second mortgage.

The brains behind this project is Michael Nekus from Sound & Media Ltd and is a chap who deserves to be congratulated. Whilst on a business trip to Japan (kinky devil, he came across a range of artists whose music, ranging from swing/acid jazz to pop/dance, he felt could be accepted by the UK market even with the language differences.

The problem was that nothing like this had ever been done before so there were several hurdles to clear during the next two years. The main problems concerned the artists contracts and also the fact that in Japan they have a price fix on new CD's. This means that a new release sells for £2299. (you thought we had it bad over here) and Michael wanted it to retail in the mid-price range. So after a bit of convincing that the project would work, the owners agreed that there might be a market in the UK and permission was given for a release. But as a final snag Michael was restricted to a maximum of three songs per artist and no photos (boo hiss)

Anyway, what about the music itself. Well being a fan of J-pop myself, I can honestly say that this is one of the best albums I've ever heard. The collection contains tracks from some of the biggest selling artists in Japan over the last two years and includes five tracks from three number one albums. WOW!

On the dance side we have TOSHINORI YONEKURA whose



opening track is one of the best on the album. Next up is KATSUMI whose albums are all guaranteed a number one chart entry.

Mellowing down a bit, we have three tracks by KEIJO NAKANISHI who could teach the Gary Barlow's which of this world a lesson or two. His tune '2 am' is my next fave track.

Touching slightly on the seventies feel, we have TOMIKO KOBAYASHI with styles ranging from soft pop to 'philly-soul'. MICHIRU KIJIMA's 'Crime of Love' rates as another five with its rock/dance influences which could sit easily in any club.

Ex-actress/model REIKO KATOH is my new goddess of song (next to GUMI SAKAI from ZARD) with her bouncy J-pop tunes which I guarantee will have everyone tapping along. Techno-pop takes its head courtesy of the E-ZEE BAND who have recently been taken up by Pioneer's in-house label.

Also on the CD is a bonus track called 'Pieces of Mind' by SANDY LAM. Now this name probably won't set any bells ringing, but she's rather popular in the East. Here's a quick c/w as proof. Since 1988 Sandy has had

1. Platinum album
2. Double Platinum

albums

- 14 Number One singles
- 16 Albums released
- 25 Sell-out concerts
- 10 Critically Acclaimed concerts
- 28 Industry Awards

She also sings the theme songs to NAUSICAA and FAREWELL MY CONCUBINE. It's therefore no wonder that Sound & Media are currently in the process of putting together an album and singles deal for the UK.

Impressed? Hell, I know I am.

This should be in everyone's collection and at the price of around £6 for almost 80 minutes of music, you've really got no excuse. So to put it plainly, buy this CD or the RYO-CHO gets it!!

If Sound & Media get a good enough response to this release there could be the possibility of anime related releases in the future, so they need your support. Who knows, in the near future you could be listening to Teruchi on Radio One. You never know.

J-GROOVE should be available to order from all good record shops and should be found on the shelves of the London branches of VIRGIN, TOWER RECORDS and the JAPAN CENTRE.

You can also contact Sound & Media direct at: SOUND AND MEDIA LIMITED, UNIT 3, WELLS PLACE, GAYTON PARK BUSINESS CENTRE, NEW BATTLEBORO LANE, REDHILL, SURREY, RH1 3DR.



RANMA-CHAN SPEAKS!!!

by
Jim Swallow

One of the most popular anime series of recent years has been the TV adaptation of manga creator Rensuke Takahashi's *RANMA 1/2*. Takahashi is without doubt the best known female manga and anime name in both the East and the West, responsible for megahit titles like *URAUSEI* and *KATSUBA* (aka *LUM!* and *MAISON*).

RANMA 1/2 is a case to point, perhaps best described as a "copied-and-pasted" and "dumbed" combination element to element of shogi-shogi, live fighting, aged love, aged a high gag concept, "good-effect" *RANMA 1/2* is a little character is an unfortunate soul cursed after falling into an enchanted pool whilst spring-

sandy, including many fans who find it in line with one of Ranma's roles and in fact with the other. Along with Genma, who also shared the curse, except he bestowed a scandal and the Tendo family dojo they live at. Ranma's involvement in martial arts, mayhem and romantic scenarios has split success for U.S. dubbed

VIZ video and their comic line, VIZ Communications.

In animation, an actor's voice is their tool, and to create the best effect for their audience the vocal artist must exercise a huge range of emotion and ability. In Japan, the voice actor's career is known as a *seiyuu*. We got a few words from the owners of the dulcet tones behind the Japanese *Ranma-Chan*, Megumi Koyashibara and the American *Ranma-Chan* and Akane Tendo, Venus Tendo and Mariam Simon.

Our three vocal actresses each had a different path to their present careers. Megumi's early days in Tokyo were spent splitting her time between a voice coaching academy and nursing school, before her career took off. As well as voicing *Ranma-Chan*, she has



worked as well as the *Ranma* world and *Mermaid* series of stories. Capable of running the writing pen from dark horror to touching romance, Takahashi is best loved for her boy meets girl squeals and their bizarre twists

with his father Genma, when splashed with cold water, Ranma transforms into the shape of whoever drowned in said pool. In his case, a girl! *Ranma-Chan* (male) becomes *Ranma-Chan* (female) to the consternation of all and

also played characters in two PBS video girl, A CATGIRL NUKU NUKU GUNDAM DOGS and most recently BLUE SEED and SLAMERS At Home in Japan. Megumi, at a popular singing star with several albums and radio shows to her credit, Venus' experience in the Canadian acting industry has seen her in several animated roles aside

alter-ego. "A lot of people asked me if she's similar to me. Yes, and I'd like to be the anime version in the way that she's very aggressive... And yet she's a cat-furry! At times because I'm struggling with it, isn't it?" Venus compares Ramma's



"The only people who know my face are the dedicated otaku."

from RAMMA 1/2, including HIRAHARA AND THE MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE, CAPTAIN MINERVO, MY LITTLE PONY: THREE SEASONS, DUCKTALKER and recently the animated anime MAGIC KNIGHT. "She" actress as well as a "voice." Venus has guest starred in two TV shows like 31 JUMP STREET, WISDOM and ROBIN'S HOODS. Myriam also works in Canada appearing in TV's THE COMMON and SECRET LIVES as well as voicing POWER FABLES and the anime features FATAL FURY, THE MOVIE and RAMMA 1/2.

RAMMA 1/2 was the first experience of Japanese animation for

enforced changes to the inner female that strikes as an in late 1980s anime. She's aggressive, she fights... she screams a lot... she's angry. Myriam identifies strongly with the "punk" Akane. Ramma... she just brings out the old in you. She's so much fun to play. She's just out there! Playing the out-of-control sister and not to the dual Ramma is clearly Myriam's idea of a good time. "She's got such attitude!" she laughs.

"And she's got great character traits and weaknesses." The character of Akane is an essential to star in the RAMMA 1/2 love triangle, as the so-nomadic like Tetsuo is betrothed to Ramma-chan in line with an old pact made by Ramma and

Venus and Myriam that was the last, as both are sent to point out and they each brought their own view to the role of Ramma-chan and Akane following in the footsteps of Megumi and her castmates. "She's a wonderful character," says Venus of her fighting female

Akane's dad Shin. Naturally an arranged marriage with a watery sex change artist doesn't fill her with joy and so to that the fact that Ramma is the first person ever to beat her in martial arts combat and contemplation reizes. But the role of Ramma-chan has one special quality that sets it aside from other Takahashi highly changed heroines. She's a guy born male, cursed with the water induced shapechange Ramma-chan is the mind and spirit of a boy in the form of a girl. So

how does a female actor play a wedding scene and that? Megumi's answer is a spiritual one. "Ramma-chan is that of a boy, even if he is a girl, so she Ramma-chan she is really and masculine guy in a female body. She outweighs how she would watch the male Ramma actor focuses about vocal inflection. Venus bites hard on this one before replying "It goes back to the struggles you have as a kid, as a teenager you're always struggling with who you are... But the hard part for me is that she's very much a woman, as I play her but she's also very guys, like a tomboy. I can relate to that." Both Venus and Myriam speak highly of their fellow Ramma voice Megumi after their meeting at a recent American anime convention. Myriam describing her as "A powerhouse of energy and very talented" with Venus adding "She's so full of life, bringing a lot to the Japanese Ramma-chan. It's because of her that there are so many fans. But many of the die-hard Ramma 1/2 fans have expressed disappointment at the delayed release of the series. "It's such a great show. It'd be a shame not to expose to all these other people in America to it." counters Venus. "People outside





her face is less well-known. "The only people who know my face are the dedicated otaku," she jokes. Content for the most part to let her voice be her contact with her admirers, Megumi isn't afraid to go above and beyond the call of duty when required. As a trained nurse, she's twice given first aid to fallen fans - better than an autograph, one would think.

Together, these three talented women have brought a lot of endearing characters to animated life, and given them a heart and soul. Like the ancient Greek plays where each actor would switch, these actresses wear ink-and-paint masks to entertain and amuse while we marvel at their versatility.

Special thanks to Yoshifumi Yoshida, via video and the Anime America staff for their assistance.

Japan should be able to enjoy it. Anime fandom has always been known for the intensity of it's following - in it's loyalty and passion, whether it's source is Japanese, American or European at the sharp end of fan opinion on the changes in the belts. Venus and Myram share similar feelings on the desires of RANMA 1/2 at all. "We love the work," says Myram. "And hopefully we've been able to expose more people to Japanese animation who aren't die-hard fans, but who may turn out to be die-hard fans (because of this). She goes on to mention her gratitude to RANMA 1/2 watchers who take the time to comment personally. "There's all been grief, they haven't been mean in their opinion of us. It's good criticism. There are a lot of people who care very much about this." She adds that meeting the fans encourages her to work harder to bring them the RANMA 1/2 they want. Venus echoes her words. "I really respect the fans' opinion, and I think it's great that they love the show so much, that they want to preserve it." And, while there is mention of the rewritten, happier, 4TH songs, she

opines that "When you have something this good, I don't think you have to worry about it, because that's what works. Megumi, by contrast, shies away from public functions and fan gatherings appearing only a few times during her recent trans-Pacific jaunt to San Jose's Anime America '95. While she's happy to perform her songs on stage, she likes to keep herself to herself, and as a vocal actor rather than a physical one



Manga reviews

CON

By Masashi Tanaka

**Equinox Manga/Mandarin
Books
£8.99**

CON is a very curious manga. It's basically a collection of stories based around a tiny dinosaur in the wild. The unique thing about this, however, is that throughout the entire comic, there is not a single word or sound effect. Add to that a cast made up entirely of animals and you have a very different kind of comic indeed. At first, you may think that it would be difficult to follow what is happening in a wordless comic, but you find that as soon as you start reading, you are carried along without a thought.

The character of Con himself is not easy to define, as it's tricky not to impose a kind of 'humanity' onto him. He's a



when you look at him from an animal point of view, his behaviour is more natural within reason - real animals don't 'drive' perks around from inside their noses. At least I don't think they do...!

The stories themselves are charming and presented in an interesting way, with some superb artwork with both animals and backgrounds excellently detailed. The pace of the stories is fast, often due to Con galloping around and head-butting things, and in some places it is very funny, especially when the animals begin to

take on more human expressions. I could easily recommend CON to anyone who wants to read something different, regardless of whether they've read any manga, or comics in general, before as it is very accessible and thoroughly enjoyable. The last page states that 'Con will return.' Well, for one, hope that he does.



victim of the danger, intent on bullying almost all of the other creatures he comes across, but





IRON FIST CHINIMI VOL 5 & 6

by **Takeshi Maekawa**

Bloomsbury

£3.99

220 pages

Well he's back. Everybody's favourite pint-sized martial artist, Chinimi returns in two more volumes from Bloomsbury.

In book five Chinimi's sister, Mei Ling, is kidnapped by a gang of bandits who have terrorised the villages around the Dalin Temple. In an attempt to rescue his sister and save the villages, Chinimi challenges the leader of the Black Flame to a duel. Can Chinimi defeat Lord Tangi and his SHOCKWAYS KUNG FU?

Book six sees Chinimi trying to survive a journey through a cave of vampire bats and then being taught an important lesson by Eld, Master of the Art of the Staff, that of movement without thought.

This series just keeps getting better and better. The artwork is superb, with great detail and

wonderful action sequences. But as well as this, the story gives the reader some very interesting things to think about. As with most martial arts, there are always aspects which can be incorporated into everyday life. Another major point is that Bloomsbury seems to have heeded the cry from the readers and reduced the amount of glue in the spine. Yes, that's right, you can actually see all of the pages now without breaking the spine, and the manga is now a pleasure to read.

Although marketed at kids, this is a manga for everyone, and a quick read to any worried parents. Don't worry. The morals far outweigh any of the violence

fair opinion based on the first issue of any comic, but there are always things that spring out. Before that, however, let's have a bit of background on the story.

Slot is the name of a magical book that is supposed to contain the secrets of an ancient treasure, stolen by a wild loner called Billy The Kid. He hopes to use the book for personal gain i.e. to make a whole bundle of money. However, the guardian of Slot, a young girl called Aasi (Aasi Ssee in the original manga) is not on his heels.

When Billy is wounded in the chase, his blood falls onto Slot who then promises wisdom in



without a loss of excitement. If you've not bought this already, I suggest a quick jaunt to the local Smith's.

RIOT #1 of

6

By **Satoshi**

Shiki

Viz Comics

\$2.75

32 pages

It's never easy to give a

return for aid, but only if he protects Aasi from harm.

The first thing that strikes you about RIOT is the artwork. It's distinctive, well drawn with good use of grey-tones, and very appealing. I remember seeing this in Newtype's GEM! comic some time ago, so I was really looking forward to reading it. But whether this is a fault with the original or the translation, it seems very staggered and doesn't flow very well, often due to loads of little comments floating around. But this is only issue 1 and judgement must be reserved until the story has had time to develop. Worth a try.



RECONTANIMATED

November 3-5 saw the fourth annual convention at Birmingham, and if you've never been to a convention for fear of being mistaken for a nut, go with no fee, then you really don't know what you're missing!

Held at the Grand Hotel again, the con boasted three video rooms with some showing 34 hours of non-stop anime. Also there were the customary room liner populars, a non-video anime-private bar, a computer room and, of course, a sex art room.

[illegible]

Over the course of the weekend, we were invited to over 70 individual anime screenings, mostly subtitled by fans, but some dubbed and original Japanese (and in a few cases, even English) as well. About 10% of these are unavailable in the US. As you can imagine, it's impossible to see everything you want to see, which is driving a tear to the eye and the occasional argument. For a maximum on some of the titles shown, see the *Dragon*. What a glorious section.

100

For those not wanting to veg out in front of a screen the whole time, there were plenty of other distractions to keep you happy. There included balls covering the internet, how to start a flame and an important discussion of positive roles for females in anime. Unfortunately, the Kon Building Workshop did come across the odd technical hitch (i.e. not enough equipment, no colour, not a lot of sound and, oh yes, no script). However, the results obtained from improvisation were far funnier than the script could ever be, turning it into an anime version of *Whose Line Is It Anyway?* There's a thought for next year.

The auction went very well this year, with some competitive bidding and some rather nice items on the lot including a Tenchi Muyo card game, a caddy Lum and a copy of CDRI which, needless to say, nobody wanted. One gripe is that the auction was held at the same time as the showing of Miyazaki's classic *PORCO ROSSO*. No fair, guys!

100

Yes, this was interesting, in my life
 best. There was a great turnout for
 this and as you can see, the quality
 of the costumes was very high. The
 reactions were obviously the
 outpouring Derry Fair, Liam & Tom-chest,
 and without a doubt. Sober justice



There also are several other TENDON Puffy toys were, unfortunately, not for sale.

The opening ceremony held in video room 1. That's our SIC screen



ANALOGUE

This year saw a marked reduction in the number of models and a noticeable increase in fan art. The quality of the art was incredibly professional and praise must go to all concerned.

DEAD END: FANTASY

If there is one place at any convention that spells doom, it has to be the dealer room. Even if you've just won the lottery, you'll come out penniless. Gracing the entrance was ANIME PRODUCTS, showing off the new Lust tape, as well as some books of original anime coin for sale (gimmie please).



Some of the entries for the MissGamerz, ranging from sensible to perverse.

The range of anime miniatures from Ground Zero Games.



GROUND ZERO GAMES was next up, with a selection of pre-painted anime minis (RODOD in a Star Fleet uniform) and then the bank manager's dream - SHEPHERD SPACE CONTROL. Eye for cash.

The rest of the dealer room was mainly taken up by fanboies, the guys and gals from R&B LEOPARD (secret fanbois here!) proudly displaying their third issue, which is four times larger than issue 2! Also present were Keith McDowell with Lucy (his 'tina' parrot) and the next Robert Maxwell, Josh Clark.

THE LUCKY CHUCK CONVENTION

With the convention nearly over, all that was left was the

fanbois awards and the results of the con's own questionnaire (info-fan favourite).

The fanbois results were:

Best art - *Shawn Wang*
Best minis - *Shawn Wang*
Best minis - *Shawn Wang*

Best minis - *Shawn Wang*

Best minis - *Shawn Wang*
Best minis - *Shawn Wang*
Best minis - *Shawn Wang*
Best minis - *Shawn Wang*





Results of the convention questionnaires were tight in places, but here are a few of the winners:
FAVOURITE MALE CHARACTER: Dark Schneider.

FAVOURITE FEMALE CHARACTER: The between Purl and Ryoko.

FAVOURITE DYKE: Ryo Ohki.

BEST ANIME: The between Macross Plus, Oh My Goddess and Tenchi.

BEST SOUNDTRACK: Macross Plus.

BEST SHOWS SCENE: Shant Nukula (note that someone voted for TOTOMIYA).

BEST UK DUB: Tenchi Muyo.

BEST UK SUB: Oh My Goddess!



The auction, here showing a Dirty Pair doll by the popular fan artist Laura Wetton.



Following the events was the popular "Politically Incorrect T-Shirt Competition." It's probably best not to go into any detail here, but let's just say that I'll never look at a fluffy T-shirt in the same way again...

It just remains to thank the committee for a marvellous time, and if you are interested in attending next year's convention I strongly advise it, then just contact them at the address below.

CONVENTION 1995

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 Jimmy Green - Treasurer and Technical

Martin Fay - Hotel Liaison and Registration
 Linda Shrimmon - Information and Badge Master
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The ideal place to lighten the strain on your wallet - the Dealers Room.

Some of the big fish in a little pond. Some of the top names in the anime fan area were unsuspectingly caught on camera (well, sort of).



The Gallop Press Overlord, Joe "ONI" Clark, looking particularly happy with his beer...



Fan artist Laura Weston makes a secret 'Sign of the Devil'.



Keith McDowell, creator of the manga 'Lucy's in Deep'.



Writer Robert Lyn Davies tries to sell us his *Daisshi*.

CRIPES, WHAT A DILEMMA!

A quick guide to only a fraction of what was on show.

KIHO'S DELIVERY SERVICE

A delightful Miyazaki piece, dealing with a young female who goes to the city to make a success of her personal delivery service. Typically brilliant animation from The Master, with a charming setting and all the little touches that make this rise above the standard anime movie.

RESPONSIBLE CAPTAIN TYLER

As you will have gathered from our lead article this issue (if not, why not?), Tyler is a guy good-for-nothing who manages to luck his way through the most difficult situations. Only two episodes were shown (more!), and they were both hilariously funny. Please will someone release this in the UK *CRYMORSE - A MESSIAN OF LOVE* (see sidebar).

Very popular in it's time, City Hunter follows 'bribeper' (bodyguard, private eye) Ryo Saeba and his partner Kaori. Blasting to out-tech Akira Kurosawa with



At the end, from the beautiful KIHO'S DELIVERY SERVICE.

also, some of the best moments are when Ryo is discovered by Kaori and promptly 'told off' with a 100-ton hammer, or similar implement of destruction. Mixed with some smart action, a lot of drama and a brilliant soundtrack, this was one of the best anime shows. *ROCKBOLT* Australia.

This is rapidly becoming one of my favourites. Mixing the fantasy genre with a good dose of comedy and self-satire (and certainly did this a world of good, nowhere else would you get a place called Antitapas or a spell named Cat 'N' Ki). The ultra-cool lead Bert Schneider had the audience laughing into the small hours. *GHOST SWAPPER* MISCAN.

The anime version of GHOSTTRUSTERS (except there's only one of them, and she's female). Miscan is a leggy red-head, ready to bust any ghost - but only for a price, and a very high one at that. Aided by her lecherous (but usually) partner, the two episode show gave an introduction to the characters while Miscan dealt with an unwitting spirit on a snowy mountain and some ghosts who wanted to rob a bank. Very funny stuff.

Other showings of particular merit were HANSON (DOGGU, ORANGE ROAD, VILLGUST and CAT GIRL MUKU MUKU) (see sidebar). Painfully, the much awaited EVANGELION was shown at night, but very few people knew of this and were indignantly panned afterwards (to say the least).



'DAISHI' - What a GASTARD!

KOICHI OHATA Q&A

by
Jim Swallow

Koichi Ohata is perhaps best known for his work on high-speed, high-body count, high-concept cyberpunk actioners like Manga Video's recent hit *GENOCYBER*, a story of psychic twins melded into a superhuman killing machine. With Ohata directing this three-part series based on the comics of Tony Takezaki, he has blitzed onto the UK anime scene. His first directing stint came on the Original Animation Video series *CYCLAWD: CYBERNETIC GUARDIAN*, after which he went to work on *GENOCYBER* and his most favoured project, *MO GEIST*. An accomplished designer by the age of thirty-three, Ohata created mecha and monsters for the aforementioned shows as well as inventing the hardware for *GUNBUSTER*, *MACROSS II*, *MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM*, the *PATLABOR GAV* series and several live action 'sentai' ('Power Rangers' style) shows. Wherever his work appears, Ohata's bio-organic styling crossing genetic and mechanical imagery, is disturbing and striking. Ohata is now the first Japanese

mecha designer to bring his work to the West, in a team-up with video distributor Central Park Media's newly-formed CPM Comics line. Co-drawing the art with American comics artist Tim Eldred (*CAPTAIN HARLOCK*, *LENSMAN*, *STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE*), the comic will be a three part *MO GEIST* miniseries adapting the anime. We caught up with him at California's ANIME EXPO '95 convention for a few questions.

Q: How do you feel about your work's popularity in the UK and the West?

A: I saw the English dub of *MO GEIST* at a convention and I enjoyed it. It was nicely done and of a very good quality. It's very interesting and very rewarding to see that my style of animation is becoming popular in the West and in the UK. I consider my style to be 'cyberpunk', and it is good to see my 'cyberpunk' titles being enjoyed in Europe.

Q: That style is very popular in the West, *GENOCYBER* has a very organic, very different look to it - does it take a long time to create that?

A: Usually when I design



something for an anime. I have an idea of what to do one or two years before the title is produced, so yes it does take a long time to come up with the organic styling.

Q: That look is also seen in your other work, like *MO GHOST*. But you have also worked on *MACROSS II*, *GUNBUSTER*, *GUNBAM* and *PATLAB* where the designs are much smoother, more sharp-edged. Is it difficult to alternate between the organic and inorganic styles of drawing?

A: If there is some design that already exists, I can take that image into consideration, into my creativity, but if I have to come up with something I've never done before, something that has never been seen, it takes a long time. If there is something already there, it's easier to imitate it or draw from it, but if there is nothing I must stretch my imagination.

Q: You have a lot of cyberpunk elements in your stories, with

cybernetics and biotechnology. Do you read a lot of science-fiction books for inspiration?

A: I have read a lot of SF novels and seen a lot of movies in the cyberpunk style, like *BLADE RUNNER*. It's a good movie! A lot of people have learned a lot from that film. But for near future stories, we have to create and add more to what *BLADE RUNNER* offered us.

Q: There's a lot of difference between *PATLABOR* (serious police mecha drama) and *MO KNIGHT LAMUNE* & 40 (cute fantasy comedy adventure), and yet you worked on both.

A: I worked on *LAMUNE* because the director was a friend. Although I do like something cute, I think I accelerate my ability when it's something hard. I prefer hard science-fiction.

Q: Do you have a favourite science-fiction movie?

A: There are many that I've seen influenced by. I've seen so many, I don't know where to begin. I've seen a lot of American and European SF and horror movies on video.

Q: Do you try to work for your audience, to give them what they want?

A: My goal is to stimulate the viewer's brain and make their body! Although my work is science-fiction, I want my viewers to experience it as if it were real.

Q: When did you know that you wanted to be an artist, a mecha designer?

A: I don't recall when I decided to be an artist...



When I realized I was an artist, I was already there! I was doing monster and mecha design, even though I began initially working as a script and story-writer.

Q: What was your first big break-through in the anime business?

A: *MO GHOST* was originally released over ten years ago in Japan, and it was the first project that taught me a lot. It made me realize that if you put your effort into it you can achieve something.

Q: You're the first anime creator to work with American comic artists, with the *MO GHOST* miniseries no sale from CPM. How do you feel about that?

A: Two years ago I was initially approached by Central Park Media to do this comicbook... I was very surprised, but also very happy that this could happen. This has given me another inspiration and challenge, and I'm very happy to work with Central Park Media on this project.

Q: What other *MO GHOST* projects will you be working on?

A: I'm working on a prequel





comic to the first **MO GHOST** video, and after that there was an **MO GHOST PART 2** video and comicbook series... At this moment, we have planned this much, but after the release of **MO GHOST 2** we will see what happens! I see this project as very challenging, and I'm happy to hear that the readers enjoy it. I'll keep putting more effort into it as long as fans are being it.

Q: What do you think of the **MO GHOST** comics?

A: A dream come true! I'm very happy to see my comicbook published in this country, and I'm flattered to be among the Western artists.

Q: What's your opinion on Western comics?

A: I like Simon Bisley's (**ABC WARRIORS**, **SLAIN**, **LOSS**) and Todd McFarlane's (**SPAWN**) artwork - they inspire me, and I like their works... Recently I have come across **GHOST** (by Adam Hughes), and although I don't know much about the background I like the style and the design.

Q: Are you attracted to work like Bisley's and McFarlane's because of the monster designs?

A: My way to appreciate beauty or scary subjects in comics comes from the way I perceived those things as a child. When I look at Western comicbooks I base my opinion on childhood experiences; it's difficult to define, but often my characters are as complex, and some regard them as beautiful and others as scary.

Q: How did you get to see the American comicbooks in Japan?

A: When I come to the U.S.A. I just pick them up, I go to comic shops and newsstands and pick out the covers that really stand out.

Q: What do you work on at home in Japan?

A: As a freelancer, I do a lot of things, I work on comicbooks, I direct animation, I write scripts and do mecha design. Now I am perceived in Japan as hard to say, but a lot of my colleagues are aware that my work is more popular outside Japan, so they have been asking me why... Sometimes I'm flattered, but sometimes it's difficult.

Q: You have designed mecha and monsters for anime shows and live action shows, is there a lot of difference?

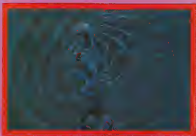
A: Yes, a lot. In animation a design is two-dimensional, but

on a live show it must be in three dimensions... In animation as well, you must think of the other people who will draw the design later, but in live action you don't have to make it that definite... You hand it over to the other creators and they refine it. I can't really say which is more difficult, but in live action it is good to see a design become a real object.

Q: You have a lot of humanism in your plots, even though there is also a lot of inhuman mecha and cybernetics in them: is this a conscious message?

A: That's right. I always try to keep a humanist message in all my work, and if I can get that across to my viewers, I'm happy. It's not all about violence and actions, I try to have a human element. It's challenging to keep that in there, but I try.

Kotchi Shota's **MO GHOST** miniseries from CPM Comics is available on import in the UK and the anime version of the story is planned for a 1996 release by Kôsei Film. The **MO GHOST PART 2** and **MO GHOST 3** prequel comics will be on sale next year. Shota's other work, **GENOCYBER**, is available on three tapes from Manga Video.



ZINE

Zone

I LOVE LUCY

No, we're not talking cheap '80s B&W sci coms, but a major new UK fan manga by Keith McDowell, called **LUCY'S IN DEEP**.

The Ed puts on his mental costume and prepares for a bit of leeching ('Ere, leave it out, Ed).



THE STORYLINE

LUCY'S IN DEEP is a fairly straight forward tale.

A young policeman gets an undercover assignment as a high school student with the aim of breaking up a drugs ring operating at the local high school. The trouble is she not only has to smush the drugs ring, but also keep her identity secret from her new peer group AND finish her maths homework! Add to this the fact that the drug pusher is an ex-con that Lucy only recently arrested and things start to get a little tricky.

THE STORY

The story in **LUCY** #1 is well written and introduces you to the majority of the main characters we're going to be seeing. Oh, this is a mental tale, but

when not being heavy in it's message the point is clear enough. Being set in a high school it also helps the reader to associate with the characters and situations that occur (except when love bullets start).

THE ARTWORK

Keith is definitely creating a style of his own, which I'm sure will become instantly recognisable as time goes on. A noticeable feature of this love is that backgrounds are often left out, or are at least simplified. Surprisingly, this does not really detract from the artwork, but tends to emphasise the main pictures and focus your eye on what's important. His use of grey tone is also good without obscuring the point too much.



Having seen many of his one-shot drawings, some of the art does look rushed, and if Keith can find the energy to care as much care over each frame in LUCY as he does in his individual illustrations, then he will without a doubt be one of the major stars of the future. But this is only the first issue of a fan manga, and a little practice brings a lot of improvement, so issue 2 will be one to look out for.

One thing you do notice about the art - the girls. This is one area where Keith is particularly good, especially for a fan artist, and he's got just the right amount of ood in them to give them the perfect look. But don't take my word for it. See for yourself.

OVERALL

For the very first issue of a new fan manga, this is very impressive. The artwork and story are of a good standard, with professional printing and a full colour cover, and with time I can see this becoming a very high quality title. I can recommend this to everyone, especially if you are thinking of starting up your own title. But need the inspiration of seeing a completed work to push you over the line.

LUCY'S IN DEEP issue #1 is 66 pages, B&W with a full colour cover.

Cover price is £1.00/£2.00 inc p&h mail order!

Available off the shelf from **POSSIDOWN PLANET** or **IMPACT** from Keith at: **FUTURE FACTORY, KESTON, LSW ROAD, RADNORSHAM, WOODBRIDGE, SUFFOLK, IP16 5NP.**



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KYUKU HENTAI

Created by Keisyyu Ando and originally run in *Shonen Jump*, **MENTAL KAMEN** has been collected into 6 handy volumes. We give you the run down on one of the funniest manga around.

To the casual observer, especially one who is not initiated into the world of manga, **MENTAL KAMEN** appears to be some kind of bizarrely perverse comic that only a real weirdo would read, and one that could only come from somewhere like Japan. Although this last statement is most probably true, anyone with the courage to actually pick up a copy and read it may well find themselves eating their words. In Japan, **MENTAL KAMEN** not surprisingly holds a kind of cult status, and it goes far beyond the norm of the standard superhero comic. Sure, Superman wore underwear on the outside. But never like this, and it was always HIS OWN underwear! As a parody of the superhero genre, the thing that makes it so hilariously funny is the sheer extremity of it all, and because you would never see something like this created in the west, it holds a certain kind of perverse 'charm'.

The basic plot is simple - every time that student Kyotuke Shikiro discovers some panties, he slaps them on his face, tosses off most of his clothes and becomes a superhero, often saving the day from bullies, robber



YOKU!! KAMEN



and the like. Fairly formulaic it may seem (i) but its appeal comes from the way that this is done. Hentai Kamen may often appear to the bad guys after they mistake his posing pouch for something as innocent as a vegetable, or American football, and disposing the enemy is done by either the faithful groin-in-the-face routine, or some kind of wonderfully unique attack.

Even though the humour is overly genial, it is much like the CITY HUNTER manga in that it's totally harmless, and if anything, HENTAI KAMEN reverses the typical stereotypes by showing that female superheroes aren't the only ones who can prance around in skimpy outfits!

For anyone who can't read Japanese, the humour is not lost. It's very easy to follow and contains so many visual gags that it shows that you don't have to read it to understand it. Due to the nature of the material, it is VERY unlikely that it will ever be translated into English, and if an anime version ever came out, there is no doubt that it would not get a UK release. So my advice to you is to track it down now, before you miss out on something unique and end up regretting it.

HENTAI KAMEN is published by Jump Comics and you should be able to find it in specialist manga or Japanese bookshops like Books Asahiya in Yaohan Plaza, London.



THE CAST

KYOSUKE SHIKIJO

A first year student at Koyu Highschool, Kyosuke is also a member of the school's kendo club holding 3rd dan. He is an all round nice guy and as rightabul as they come. He is seemingly a normal, well adjusted person. However,



HENTALI KAMEN

Inside the body of this everyday student sleeps the blood of a hentali (pervert deviant etc). Whenever Kyosuke chances upon a pair of girls panties, he has an uncontrollable urge, placing them over his face and transforming into the ultimate superhero - HENTALI KAMEN!



MAKI SHIKIJO (KYOSUKE'S MOTHER)

Maki is a blonde beauty who by day runs the lingerie boutique "CANDLE". But one thing separates her from the everyday single mother - she is a screaming SM freak who likes nothing better than pouring hot candle wax on poor Kyosuke's back and whipping him. As this kind of upbringing is unlikely to leave anyone unaffected it goes some way to explain Kyosuke's transformations.



KYOSUKE'S FATHER

Looking and acting a little too much like Dirty Harry, Kyosuke's father was a detective killed in the line of duty. He met Maki while doing a raid on the SM club SODOM, where she was working as a part-time mistress.



AIKO HIMENO

Aiko first met Kyosuke when he saved her from a pack of bullies at school. Since then they were obviously rather taken with each other. But prevailing events have made it difficult for them to really get close. This matter is not helped by Aiko's butler who is constantly spying on them from whenever possible. Aiko is very, very rich and suffers from the most bizarre of phobias: she is petrified of the male, rather regions which often causes her to faint in terror whenever Hentali Kamen jumps into action.



An Introduction To Japan

Welcome to the first of what will hopefully be a regular section in J-FAN about some of Japanese animation and things we have at some time wished they could visit the Land of the Rising Sun itself. But as I'm sure most of you will have found out, it's not cheap. Just two years ago I was lucky enough to have the chance to spend three weeks (not three weeks in that wonderful country, travelling from Tokyo to Kyoto down to Hiroshima and back again) it was certainly an experience for the first time solo traveller (and one I would thoroughly recommend).

The aim of this section is to bring you just a hint of what it was like and to let you see some of the places I used to just dream about seeing. As I mentioned earlier it wasn't cheap. The whole three weeks set me back almost £2000 (even though I was staying with friends). The average off-peak flight is around £600 if you shop around; rising to about £900 in high season. I went at the end of March with Virgin Atlantic and was lucky enough to catch the cherry blossoms

which are only in bloom for a few weeks each year.

One thing I did discover while over in Japan is that you do not need to speak the language to get by (but a little bit and a dictionary helps). Now I have taken a year's night school (11 hours/week) and had a very basic grasp of the language but not to the effect of stringing together a conversation, especially with jet lag and culture shock (adding for half the holiday!) Still, I found that nearly everyone either (a) spoke English, (b) wanted to practise their English on the (c) I looked at me rather funny as I tried to ask for a seat at the Cinema with a pocket E-J dictionary and a bag stuffed with anime goodies (hey, they were showing Dragon Ball and I wasn't going to miss that).

Anyway as I was saying, over the next few months we'll go around the places I visited and try to give you a first hand view of the sights and maybe some places to visit if you're going. We start next issue with Hiroshima so I'll see you then.



A wonderful landscape in a Japanese park.



Japan's famous cherry blossoms overlook a village.



Akihabara, Tokyo - The Electric Town District.



A shrine on Miyazaki Island.

PARODY



THE PAGE WITH NO NAME

Due to printing deadlines, train schedules and the wind speed on Thursdays, we haven't time to print any of your letters or pics in this issue, but keep 'em coming and thanks to everyone who has written in already. I'm glad to say that so far we've had nothing but praise, so we must be doing something right!

Send letters and pictures to:
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